gan to subside, addressed the meeting. "I see that the community agrees with us. Will you decide this way?"

"We will," resounded from the meeting.

Then I read the draft of the resolution and added, "Those who agree, please raise their hands." The entire meeting came into motion. Old men turned toward one another, their shadows moving on the walls. One of them rose slowly from his seat and took a step forward. He crossed himself three times, turned to face the people, and fell to his knees with his right hand raised high over his head. "I swear!" he said in a loud voice. "So help me God!"

The droning of voices became louder. Lazar and still another man were also on their knees before the teacher's desk, their right hands stretched toward the ceiling, fingers set as for the sign of the cross. All over the room men were kneeling and women crying. Many voices repeated, "I swear! So help me God!"

"What does this mean?" I asked Thomas.

He whispered quickly, "You told them to raise their hands. That is what people do when they take an oath."

"And why are the women crying?"

"They think another war is coming."

"Should I explain to them?"

"Why? If the community wants to take an oath, let it do so."

He turned to the meeting and, holding the text of the resolution over his head, said firmly, "This is what the Chorino community has decided and sworn to keep in good faith. So help us God! Is such your will?"

"Such is our will," came the answer from all sides.

Thomas handed the resolution to me and said, "The meeting is ended."

THE COW DEATH

Quietly, without hurrying, the peasants left the schoolhouse. Some stopped to thank Thomas, some looked at us. I sat at the teacher's desk copying the resolution and was the last to leave. The porch was completely dark, but the snow on the road shimmered in the moonlight. A dark mass separated itself from the doorpost, a man in a short coat barred my way, and a voice whispered:

"For God's sake, mister! I must ask you something. Tell me the truth."

Now I could see him—his face was a foot away from my eyes. I recognized the haggard features, the thin blond beard, the restless,